

School Nutrition Programs: Free & Reduced-Price Verification Instructions SY19-20

Verification is the process by which schools confirm the eligibility of a sample of approved free and reduced-price meal applications. **Schools will report the verification results and October eligibility data on the School Food Authority (SFA) Verification Collection Report in MAPS.** Please carefully read through these instructions to ensure reporting accuracy. Additional instructions can be found in the [USDA's Eligibility Manual](#).

Important Verification Dates:

- October 1** (1) Record Application Counts (2) Calculate Sample Size (3) Send Household Notification Letters
- October 31** Record Student Counts as of October 31
- November 15** Deadline to collect household documentation/complete verification process
- November 20** Submit Verification Report in MAPS: Nov 1-20

October 1 (1) Record Application Counts (2) Calculate Sample Size (3) Send Household Notification Letters

1. Record Application Counts

Use a paper copy of the [verification form](#) as a worksheet to record category counts.

4-A: Record the number of approved **Applications** for each category as of **October 1** on the verification form in section 4-A. *Student counts (column B) will be captured as of October 31.*

4-1 Tip: Categorically Free Eligible – Record the number of categorically free **applications** (SNAP, TANF, FDPIR or Foster Care categories) only if NOT Directly Certified/NOT located in the DCA system. Proof of eligibility has not been confirmed and these applications will be included in the pool subject to the verification process. Applications confirmed as directly certified (proof of eligibility) should be counted in Section 3 only. Do not duplicate counts. Direct Certification eligibility always supersedes and SNAP should be given top preference if multiple eligibility sources exist.

2. Sample Size – Calculate the Number of Applications to Verify

The applications listed in section 4 are subject to verification because proof of eligibility has NOT been established.

- Total the number of **applications** reported in section 4, column A.
 - This is the number of applications in the pool subject to the verification process.
- Multiply the total number of applications in the pool by .03 (3%).
 - **Round all decimals up to the next whole number.**
 - This calculation equals the number of applications you will need to verify.

Calculation Example – 3%

Section 4	Students approved as FREE or REDUCED PRICE eligible through a household application	**ALL SFAs collecting applications must report Section 4**	A. Number of Applications
		4-1: Approved as categorically FREE Eligible: Based on those providing documentation (e.g. a case number for SNAP, TANF, FDPIR on an application)	1
		4-2: Approved as FREE eligible: Based on household size and income information	24
		4-3: Approved as REDUCED PRICE eligible: Based on household size and income information	17

Total number of Applications in section 4 (Column A) multiplied by 3% =

42

X **00.03 (3%)**

In this example 2 applications should be randomly selected for the verification process

= **1.26 (2)** (round all decimals up)

School Nutrition Programs: Free & Reduced-Price Verification Instructions SY19-20

Method of Verification

Dependent upon on the percent of household applications that responded to last year's verification process. If during last year's verification process:

- **80% or more of the household's responded**, your district may conduct the Random (Alternate One) method and randomly select 3% of the approved applications on file to verify.
- **Less than 80% of the household's responded**, your district is required to conduct the Error Prone (Standard) method and select 3% of applications considered "error-prone" to verify.
 - Error-Prone Applications – Applications within \$100 per month of the Income Eligibility Guidelines.

Draw the 3% verification sample from applications subject to verification (section 4)

3. Send Verification Letters

- Before sending verification letters, a Confirmation Review must be conducted to ensure accuracy of the initial determination.
 - Must be a person other than the official who made the initial eligibility determination
 - Document the confirmation review by the "confirming signature" line of the selected application
- Send the "We Must Check Your Application" letter to selected household(s)
Tip: Use the Verification Activity Tracker worksheet to document the process
- **Gather/confirm household's proof of eligibility responses by Nov 15**
 - Households have 10 days to reply
 - If no reply, follow-up contact at least 1x (document)
 - District's with low response rates will be subject to error-prone method the following year
- Send the prototype "We Have Checked Your Application" letter to households
 - If verification results in higher benefits (e.g., changing from reduced-price to free category), the change is effective immediately and must be implemented no later than 3 operating days later
 - If verification results in reduced or terminated meal benefits, households must be given 10 calendar days' written advance notice of the change (continue benefits for 10 calendar days)
- Document household responses/nonresponses in section 5-8 on the Verification form

October 31st Record Student Counts

Report the number of approved **students** as of October 31st for each category (Sections 1 – 4 Column B) and record counts on the [Verification form](#). An updated direct certification report should be reviewed on or just prior to October 31st.

1-1: Enrolled Student Counts – Enter the number of (A.) OPI School Sites and (B.) Total enrolled students as of Oct 31.

1-2: Residential Child Care Institutions (RCCIs) must enter the number of sites and students enrolled for each type.

2-Section 2: This section is applicable to **CEP/Provision 2 sites only**

2-3: CEP Sites – Enter the number of (A.) Schools and (B.) Students participating in CEP

Provision 2 sites - Record the number of Prov 2 sites and students in 2-2A & B (non-base year).

2-2aB: Prov 2 -Multiply the most recent Prov 2 base year FREE percentage by the enrollment reported in 2-2B

2-2bB: Prov 2 Multiply the Prov 2 base year REDUCED PRICE percentage by the enrollment reported in 2-2B

If ALL school sites are Provision 2, CEP or RCCI check items 3-1 & 5-1 and you are finished.

If only SOME of the school district's sites participate in Provision 2 or CEP, report as follows:

- Section 3-2: Report SNAP-only direct certification data for the schools NOT participating in CEP/Provision 2
- Report remaining fields and all other applicable Sections for schools NOT participating in CEP/Provision 2

School Nutrition Programs: Free & Reduced-Price Verification Instructions SY19-20

Section 3-B: Student Counts - Directly Certified as of Oct 31

Students in Section 3 are NOT subject to verification because proof of eligibility has already been confirmed. Students can only be counted as being in one category

3-1: Leave 3-1 blank (unless *all* school sites are CEP/Provision 2 or RCCI)

3-2 B: Students SNAP Directly Certified in DCA (SNAP Direct Cert supersedes all other eligible categories)

When a student is Directly Certified through DCA that eligibility supersedes all other information on file (such as household application or letter from the SNAP agency) and the student should be counted as directly certified. If a student is directly certified with SNAP and another program (e.g. Foster Care), SNAP should be given preference. Directly Certified students are not subject to the verification process as proof of eligibility has already been confirmed. Students can only be counted in one category.

Item 3-2 will auto-populate the number of SNAP DC from DCA as of Oct31 in the MAPS system. Please review for accuracy.

3-3 B: Students Directly Certified by other source categories: TANF, FDPIR, homeless, migrant, runaway & foster (proof of participant eligibility confirmed by source or through DCA system). *This item will also auto-populate a count from DCA.*

3-4 B: Categorically Free Students by household submission of SNAP letter only. SNAP Letters that were also validated in the DCA system as directly certified should be counted in 3-2 B as SNAP directly cert only (do not count in both places).

		ALL SFAs must report Section 3 or check box 3-1 if applicable	
Section 3	Students approved as FREE eligible NOT subject to verification	3-1: <input type="checkbox"/> Check the box only if all schools and/or RCCIs in the SFA were not required to perform direct certification with SNAP (i.e. NON BASE year Provision 2/3 for all schools)	B. Number of FREE Students
		3-2: Students directly certified through Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP): Do not include students certified with SNAP through the letter method.	97
		3-3: Students directly certified through other programs: Include those directly certified through Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or Medicaid (if applicable); those documented as homeless, migrant, runaway, foster, Head Start, Pre-K Even Start, or non-applicant but approved by local officials. DO NOT include SNAP students already reported in 3-2.	11
		3-4: Students certified categorically FREE eligible through SNAP letter method: Include students certified for free meals through the family providing a letter from the SNAP agency.	0

Section 4-B: Student Counts – Categorical/Income Free & Reduced as of Oct 31

4-1 B: Categorically Free Students - Application listing a Case Number *only* (SNAP, TANF, FDPIR or Foster Care)

Students reported as Categorically Free have NOT been confirmed as Directly Certified in DCA and are subject to the verification process because proof of eligibility has not been confirmed by source records.

Categorically Free Students that have been confirmed in DCA are considered Directly Certified and should be recorded in section 3.

4-2 B: Report the number of **Free Income based Students**

4-3 B: Report the number of **Reduced-Price Students**

		ALL SFAs collecting applications must report Section 4		
Section 4	Students approved as FREE or REDUCED PRICE eligible through a household application	4-1: Approved as categorically FREE Eligible: Based on those providing documentation (e.g. a case number for SNAP, TANF, FDPIR on an application)	1	3
		4-2: Approved as FREE eligible: Based on household size and income information	24	35
		4-3: Approved as REDUCED PRICE eligible: Based on household size and income information	17	30

School Nutrition Programs:

Free & Reduced-Price Verification Instructions SY19-20

Section 5 – Verification Process & Results

5-1: Only check the box if **all** school sites are exempt from the verification process. Types of schools exempt to the Verification process include: CEP, Provision 2, Residential Child Care Institutions and Milk only.

5-2: Please ensure to collect all household documentation by November 15th.

If you are unable to complete the verification process by November 15, the district must submit a written request to this deadline. See the Verification Deadline Extension Request form online.

5-3: For further information, see page 2 for the Method of Verification details and reference the Eligibility Manual

5-4: Only report the number of Error-Prone Applications on file if your district had to conduct the Error-Prone method of verification

5-5: Report the number of Applications Verified

- This number should reflect the calculation on page 1
 - Total of Section 4 Column A multiplied by 3% - round all decimals up
- This number should also equal the total number of verified applications in Section 5-8

ALL SFAs must report Section 5 or check box 5-1 if applicable 5-1: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Check the box if ALL schools and/or RCCIs are exempt from verification (see instructions for list of exemptions). If 5-1 is checked, no further reporting in Section 5 is required.				
5-2: Was verification performed and completed? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes, completed by November 15th <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, completed after November 15th <input type="checkbox"/> No, verification was NOT performed or the process was not completed.	5-3: Type of Verification process used: 1. <input type="checkbox"/> Standard (Lesser of 3% or 3,000 error-prone) 2. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alternate one (Lesser of 3% or 3,000 selected randomly) 3. <input type="checkbox"/> Alternate two (Lesser of 1% or 1,000 error prone applications PLUS lesser of one-half of one percent or 500 applications with SNAP/TANF/FDPIR case numbers)			
If 1 or 3 is checked in 5-3, report 5-4 . If 2 is checked in 5-3, enter	5-4: Total ERROR PRONE applications: Report all applications as of October 1st considered error prone		5-5: Number of applications selected for verification sample:	2

5-6: Direct Verification – Using records from public agencies to verify proof of income and/or program participation From the application(s) *selected for the verification process*, if none were validated as directly certified in DCA or confirmed with agency records, check the box.

5-7: Confirmed through Direct Verification - Only report counts in this section if applications selected for the verification process were directly verified/confirmed with agency records.

ALL SFAs must report 5-7 or check box 5-6 if applicable 5-6: <input type="checkbox"/> Check the box if direct verification was not conducted in the SFA, (i.e. not one of the schools and/or RCCIs in the SFA performed direct verification). If 5-6 is checked, skip 5-7.			
Report if FREE and/or REDUCED PRICE eligibility is confirmed through	5-7: Confirmed through		

School Nutrition Programs: Free & Reduced-Price Verification Instructions SY19-20

November 20 Submit Verification Form Online to OPI

Submit the SFA Verification Collection Report online through [MAPS](#). The electronic verification form will be available in MAPS November 1-20. Paper Versions Will Not Be Accepted. The [PDF/paper version of the form](#) is available for use as a worksheet only.

How to navigate to Verification Report in MAPS:

1. Click on **Applications**
2. Click on **Verification Report**



3. Click **Modify** Next to SY19-20



School Nutrition Programs: Free & Reduced-Price Verification Instructions SY19-20

4. Fill out all fields
5. Click **Save** at the bottom of the form when done.

The screenshot shows a web application interface for "School Nutrition Programs" in Montana. The page title is "SFA Verification Collection Report For School Year: 2017 - 2018". The form is for "0104 - Status: Active" and "Centerville Public Schls". The address is "603 Stockert Rd, Sand Coulee, MT 59472". The type of agency is "Educational Institution" and the type of SNP organization is "Public".

General Information
Type of Organization: Public

Verification Contact Information

	Salutation	First Name	Last Name
1. Name:	Mrs.	Kim	Womanczuk
2. Email Address:	mwk@centerville.k12.mt.us		
3. Phone:	(406) 736-538	Ext: 226	Fax: (406) 736-5210
4. Title:	Head Cook		

Due Date: November 15, 2017

Instructions

Attachment Count: 0

Internal Use Only

Date Received:	Date Approved:
Date Opened: 10/01/2017	Date Closed: 11/30/2017
Status: [Not Started, F.]	

Internal Comments:

Comments to SFA:

Buttons: Save, Cancel

MAPS Online Verification Form Features

The system pre-fills some of the items for you such as the number of directly certified students will auto-populate a count referenced from the [DCA system](#). Edit checks have been built into the form to correct data entry errors.

Contact Alie Wolf at aliew@mt.gov or (406) 444-4413 with any further verification questions.